

# STEEL DIVISION

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## NORMANDY 44

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### THE ARTBOOK

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# THE ART STYLE

From the initial stages of our project, we wanted **Steel Division: Normandy 44** to be more than a WW2 game.

The game's identity is well reflected in the very first concept-arts that we made. Our strongest will was to take a step back from the traditional WW2 imagery which often uses desaturated colours, sepia tones or black-and-white pictures.

We wanted to add a contemporary touch that would impact directly on the game experience: the player should get the impression that he's taking part in a war that unfolded one or two years earlier. We decided to put an emphasis on the game's colours and lighting, always creating at the same time a unique atmosphere to each map. **Steel Division: Normandy 44**'s vivid colours and art immerse players in a unique environment.

Bois de Limors [Edward Delandre] >





10-65



■ Aviation Concept [Mathieu Chevalier] ■ Armored Vehicle Concept [Lei Chihab]

■ Anti-tank Concept [Lei Chihab] ■ Support Vehicle Concept [Lei Chihab]

We never conceived our units as lone entities, they were always deeply intertwined with the lively action we wanted to depict.



■ Artillery Concept [Mathieu Chevalier]

■ Recon Concept [Mathieu Chevalier]

■ Infantry Concept [Mathieu Chevalier]

■ Thumbnails & 3D Concept [Mathieu Chevalier]

Our first concept artworks were made to capture each unit's specificities: an armored warfare won't give the same visual feeling as close combats between infantry squads.



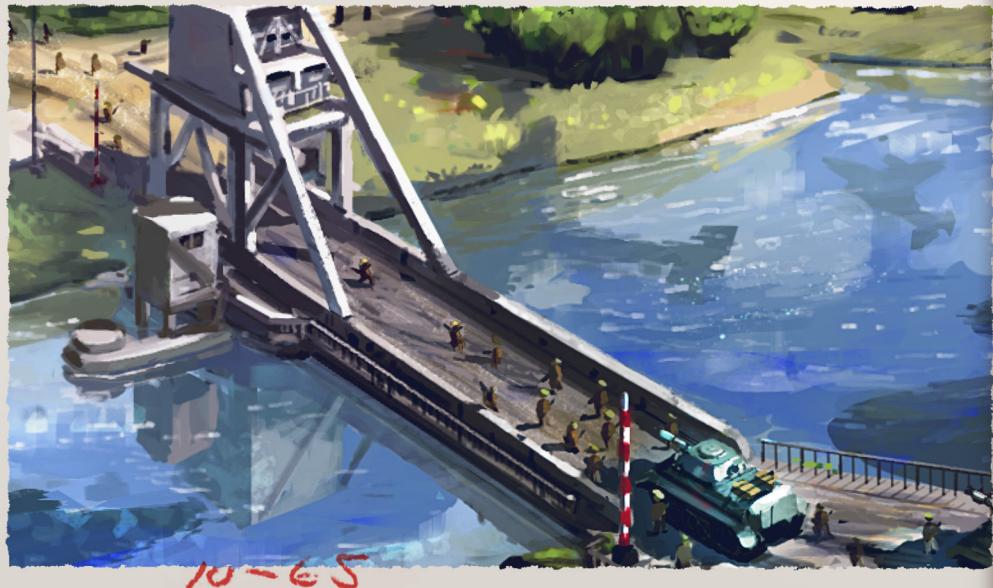
■ Omaha [Mathieu Chevalier]

■ Cheux [Mathieu Chevalier]

■ Colombelles [Mathieu Chevalier]

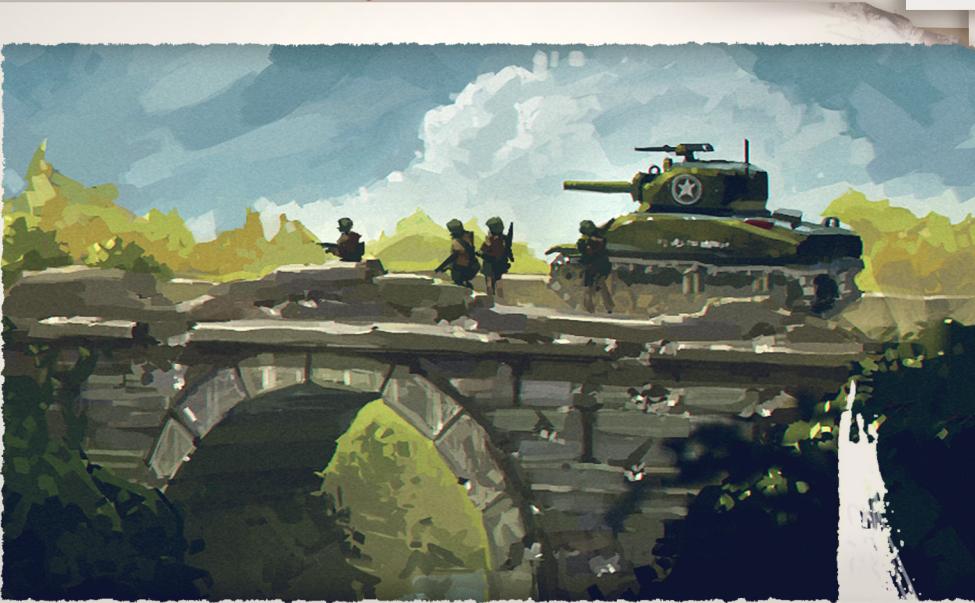
■ Cote 112 [Mathieu Chevalier]

Each map has a strong signature which conveys an original visual impression. Players can immediately recognize the famous Omaha Beach or Colombelles' factory at dusk for example.



- Colleville [Mathieu Chevalier]
- Pointe du Hoc [Mathieu Chevalier]
- Pegasus Bridge [Mathieu Parisot]
- Mont d'Ormel [Mathieu Chevalier]

Depicting combat action integrated in each specific environment was a founding moment during the development. It helped us creating more credible and striking battlegrounds.



■ Bois de Limors [Edward Delandre] ■ Caumont-l'Éventé Concept [Edward Delandre]

■ Odon [Mathieu Chevalier] ■ Villers Bocage [Mathieu Parisot]

What would a squad on Odon's bridge look like? What would a tank in the Bois de Limors feel like? Each concept rests upon a thorough documentation work linked to in-depth artistic researchs.



□ **Sainte-Mère-Église** [Mathieu Parisot]

«Here we had to capture the mood of «Sainte-Mère-Église». With the use of colors and light, we tried to emphasize one of the many city battle that may occur in the game.»



■ Sir Richard Gale [E. Delandre] Fritz Bayerlein [E. Delandre] Rodney Frederick Leopold Keller [M. Chevalier] Dietrich Kraiss [M. Chevalier] Stanisław Maczek [M. Parisot]

■ Edgar Feuchtingere [M. Parisot] Maxwell Taylor [E. Delandre] Gerhard Von Schwerin [E. Delandre] Sir Gordon MacMillan [M. Parisot] Leroy Watson [E. Delandre]

From the high-ranking general to the aide-de-camp, we wanted to create realistic portraits, far from the traditional black-and-white imagery.



■ German Aide de camp [Mathieu Parisot] ■ American Aide de camp [Edward Delandre] ■ English Aide de camp [Mathieu Parisot]  
This distinctive graphic style associated to bold colours gives character to the images and leaves us with a deep, living impression.



□ **Colombelles** [Nicolas Sitbon]

«Besides defining Colombelle's visual identity through its tone and color, this picture aims to portray the infantry-combat scenario that the player would picture throughout his experience.»



■ **Thumbnail Researchs** [Edward Delandre]

■ **Alternative Keyart Concept** [Edward Delandre]

■ **Keyart Final Render** [Edward Delandre] & **Logotype** [Thierry Dutner]

Finding the right key art was a long and iterative reflexion. The logo's balance between the figurative text and the synthetic lines is an entity in its own right, fueled with the collective WW2 imaginary.

## PRODUCTION

We created close to 800 units' icons to depict all the soldiers and vehicles available in-game, from handmade illustrations to in-game screenshots. Those icons can be found in the battlegroup editor and can thus be the first contact players have with our units. We wanted that first look to be both accurate and promising.

We chose to make handmade illustrations for the infantry units to emphasize on their position but also on their facial expression, to give them more personality. No two are alike and each one of them conveys a feeling of immediacy as if the squad's movements had been frozen in time.

As for the other units' icons, from tanks to aircrafts, in-game screenshots were the best way for us to capture the unfolding action.





## WEAPONS

For the 252 weapons present in the game, we studied many military documents, and came to the conclusion that it was best to draw them rather than using photographs. We accentuated the lighting effect on the upper part of each weapon, to make it stand out. Our choice results in a much more qualitative outcome compared to our previous games.



## INFANTRY

For the infantry, we took an entirely different approach from the aides de camp and commandants' portraits. Contrary to most high-ranking men, infantry soldiers were the ones risking their lives in the front line, and we wanted to give the impression of genuine ID photo as if they were soldiers who actually fought on the battlefield during World War 2.

Each face corresponds to a particular type of unit in each division. When the player selects one of his units on the battlefield, he can see the face and hear the voice of the man in charge: the artistic direction we took adds both depth and realism, underlining the fact that the men under the player's command aren't nameless and faceless individuals.

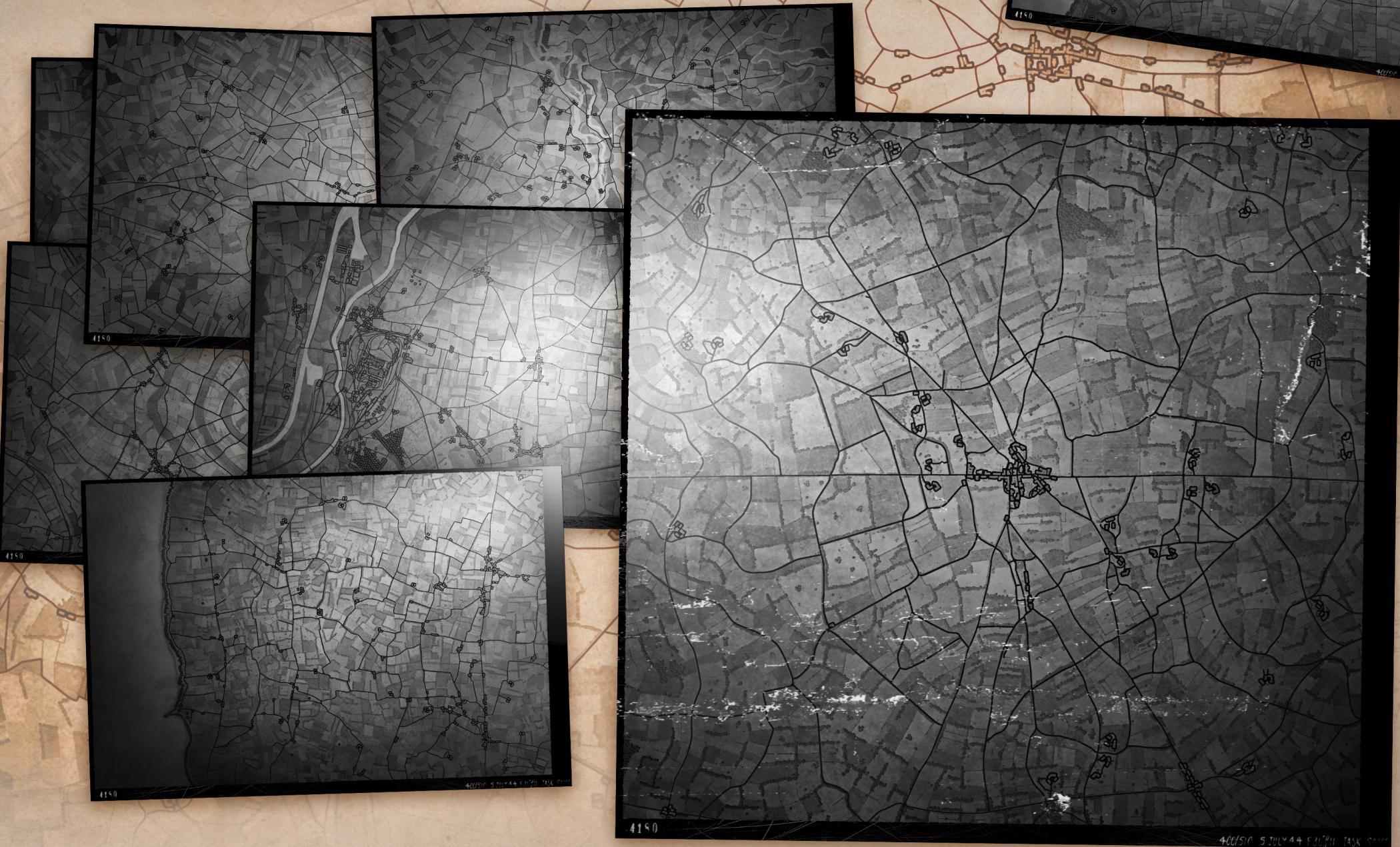


## MENU

In the early stages of **Steel Division: Normandy 44**'s menu, we took a cinematographic approach, reflected by the introducing catchphrase «They fight for all of us.» Too much cliché, we gave up on this draft for a different, more complex approach.

We wanted to immerse the player from the beginning, to make him feel like he is an integral part of the story. Pictures from the war, placed on a table, invites him to plunge into each of the fights. We built the menu as a *mise en abyme* of the game's command table: in a perfect loop, the player can find the same desk during every in-game battle when zooming out and, literally, putting things into perspective.





We used real RAF aerial photographs to create the game's maps, transcribing the spirit of each of these real locations in the game.

## TOWN REFERENCES

The following pages will display some historical images from Normandy that helped us constructing the setting of the game...



## CITY REFERENCES

...from the density of information needed on the screen to the arrangement of every little detail noticeable on the maps.



## BUNKER REFERENCES

It's was a time of war. How were the buildings destroyed? How did the fightings impact the bunkers' walls?



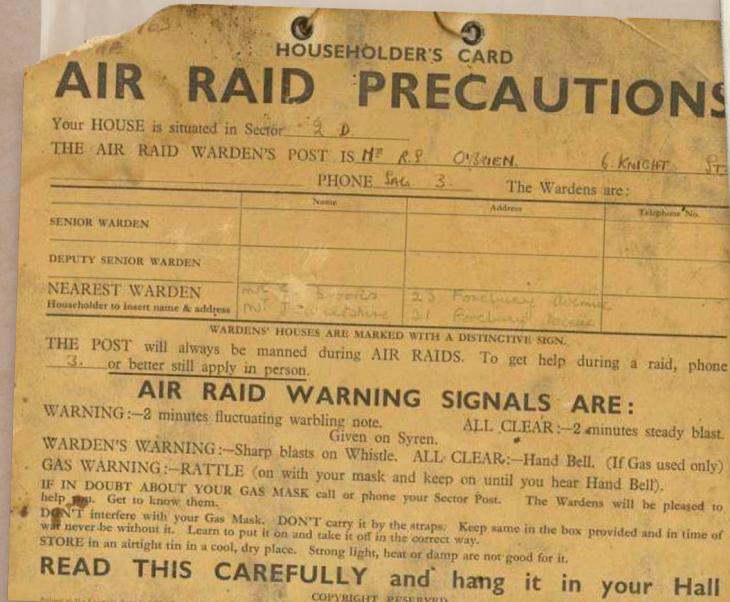
## COUNTRYSIDE REFERENCES

We also had to look at the famous bocage that made the battles so challenging: we wanted to depict its density as accurately as possible.



## PRINTING REFERENCES

We relied on real documents for our printing references, from the fonts to the global structure and the general feeling conveyed by these historical pieces.

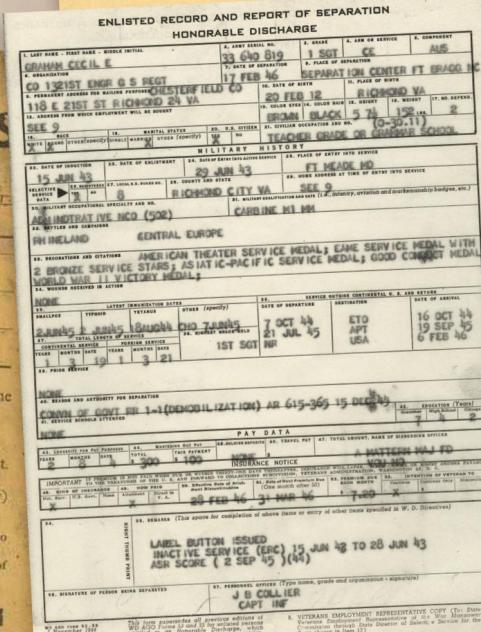
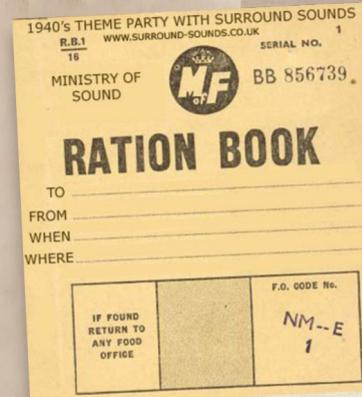


**DINKY TOYS**

### NOTICE OF REVISED PRICES

Owing to rising costs of production, it has been found necessary to increase the prices of all Dinky Toys from 15th September 1939.

A new price list is now ready. Ask your dealer for a copy.



## LIGHTING

Every map needed to have its own identity. We particularly used the lighting to create various atmospheres. The weather conditions and the type of sunlight are changing every time, and one battle doesn't look like any other in the game.

For example, we drew inspiration from the Kodachrome colors to create Colombelles, which has some purplish and orange tones to some extent, while soldiers fought under a rainy weather. On the other hand, Carpiquet's lightning is shaped by a brilliant sun that flattens the map, much more like in Southern France. Finally, the numerous effects we used allowed us to break the monotony of the bocage.



## RIVERS

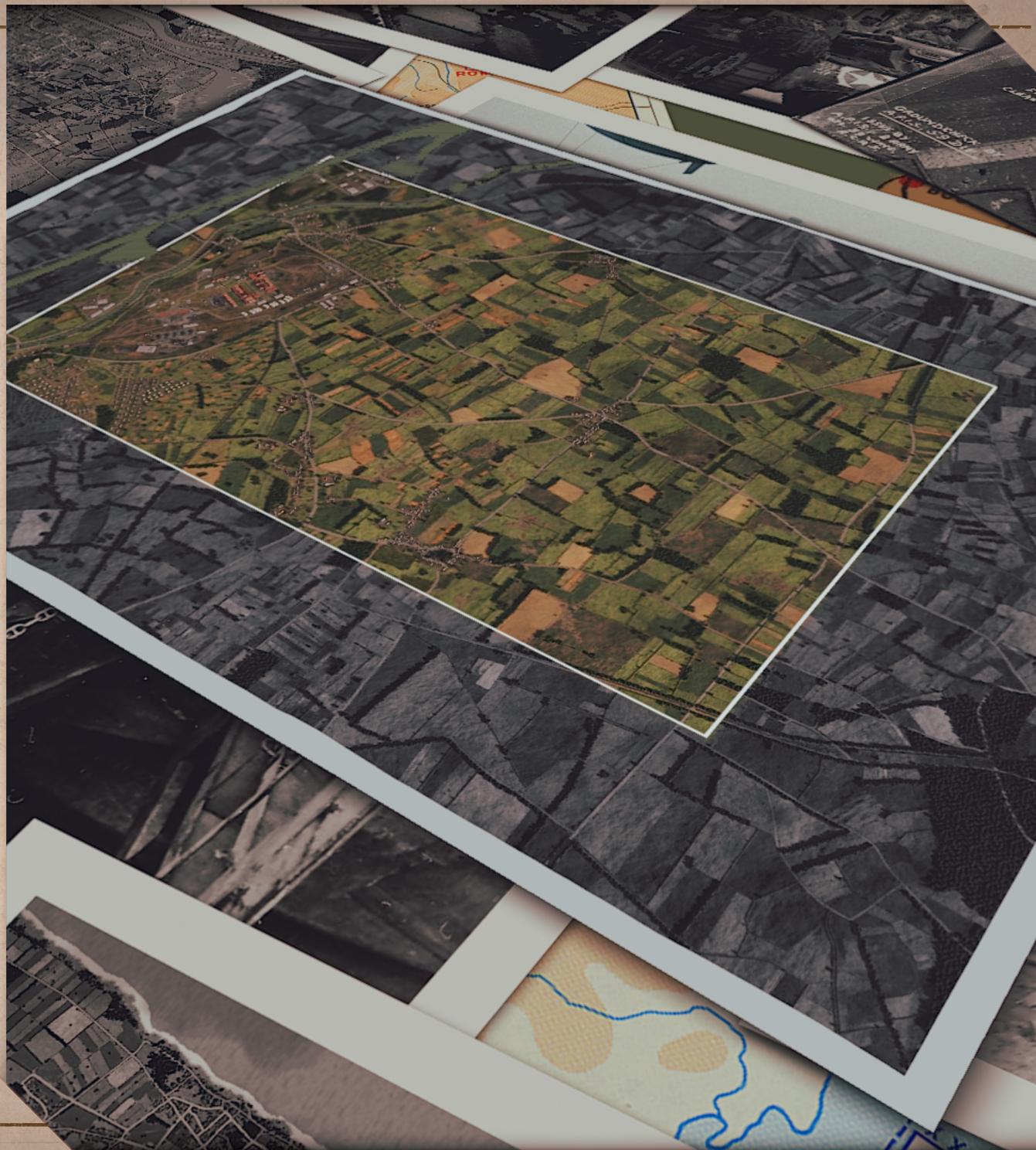
In **Steel Division: Normandy 44**, we used new shaders to improve the overall feeling of the water compared to our previous productions. We also relied on two techniques: the normal mapping and the displacement mapping, to give an illusion of relief.



## COMMAND ROOM

The command room plays a significant role in **Steel Division: Normandy 44**'s staging. When the player zooms out in-game, he can see aerial photographs and Ordnance Survey maps displayed on his desk. The idea is that every player slips into the shoes of a Military Chief of Staff and that he sees the combat operations unfold on these documents. In our previous productions, players were directly on the ground and lacked perspective. **Steel Division: Normandy 44**'s setting immerses the player in a broader and more complex story. He's both the one in charge in the command room and the one leading the charge on the battlefield.

We thought the Ordnance Survey map and the command room as governing principles: they pace the player's in-game experience, from the menu to the missions' briefings and the in-game setting.



## VFX

We brought a lot of work to our visual effects which were one of the biggest challenges we had to face in **Steel Division: Normandy 44**'s development. The most important thing for us was to sharpen the impacts; we wanted the player's actions to produce a strong visual reaction. In that sense, we exaggerated the off-map artillery's explosions to highlight the player's impact on his environment. The video references we used helped us making credible visual effects.



## GENESIS

Our art development has changed and improved since our last productions. For **Steel Division: Normandy 44**, we were committed to conveying the feeling of chaos that hit Normandy at that time. To do so, we did research on the cities before and after the combats, to get a clear picture of their state of destruction.

Our art studies on the Norman bocages and environment helped us in our work. As the vast majority of the game's maps is covered by countryside, it was a real challenge for us to add some variation. In our previous productions, a field only was a flat tint; in **Steel Division: Normandy 44**, battles unfold in about fifty different kinds of field.

Players will also get the chance to get a glance at Normandy's rich heritage. Our pre-production studies made us aware of all the details that forge Norman identity and the necessity to insert them in-game became obvious. We wanted the player to get the feeling that the environment, its past and its legacy were worth fighting for.





Our very first concept arts are therefore trying to catch Normandy's essence and to respect it while picturing armed actions.





# VISUAL CHALLENGES

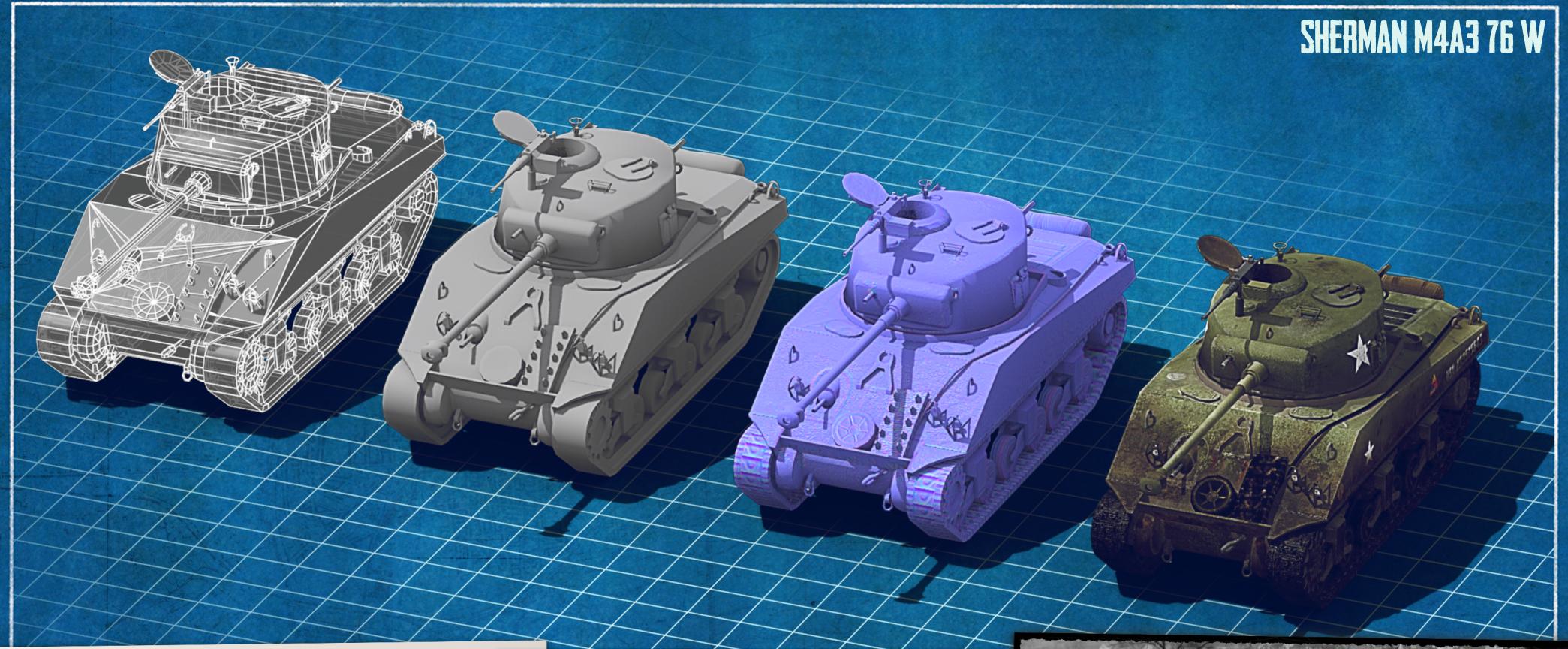
THIERRY DUNTER, ART DIRECTOR

**Steel Division** invites the player to a new visual experience of World war 2, providing a specific artistic ambiance.

How can one still being concerned with WW2 after so many artistic depiction on that subject? This is without a doubt the most recurring question we've been asked since the beginning of this project.

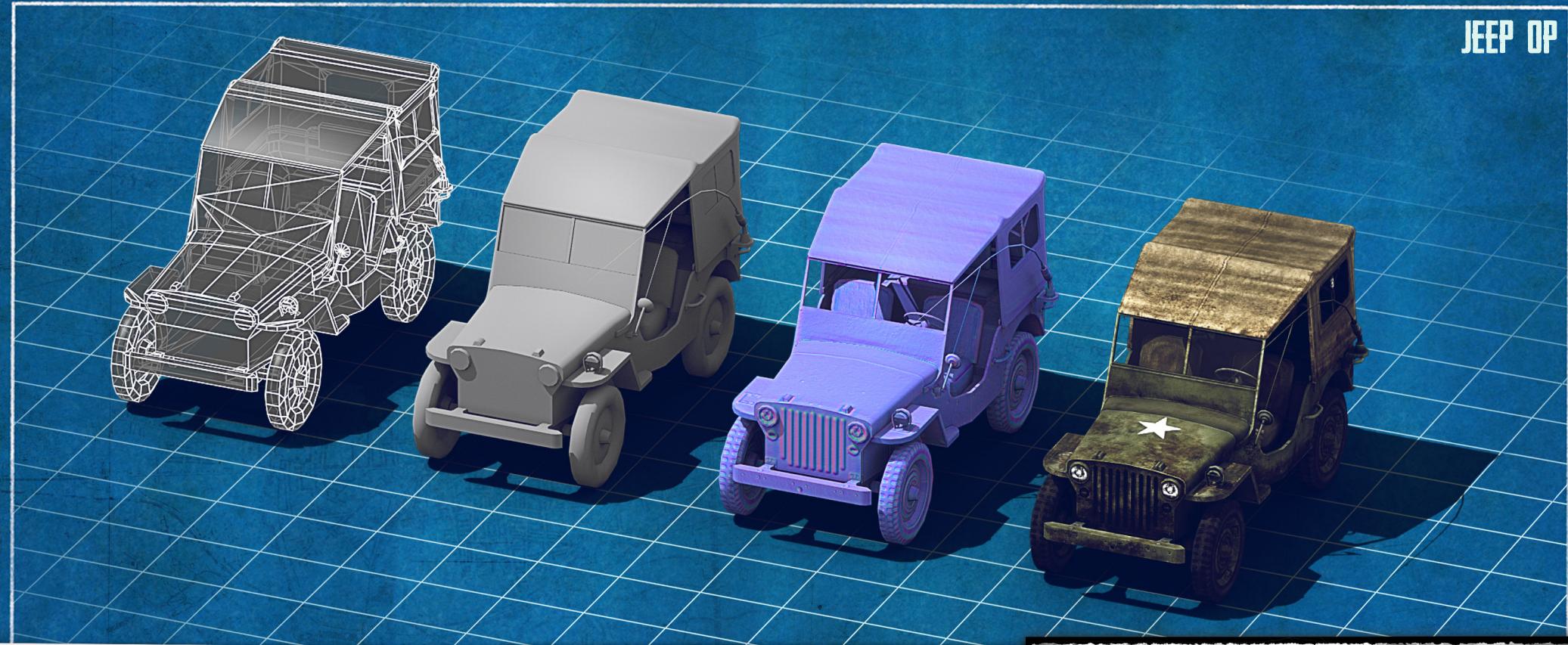
Our guideline was to focus on bringing a contemporary view of that era, and getting rid of the classic WW2 imagery. Therefore, sepia, monochromatic or even black & white media were proscribed. We have gathered a lot of material, especially picture archives from the 40's and 50's in order to get the general feeling, the atmosphere, the scenery, ... We deemed important to always accentuate the colors' strength & saturation on screen in order to emphasize **Steel Division**'s typical creative ambition.

## SHERMAN M4A3 76 W

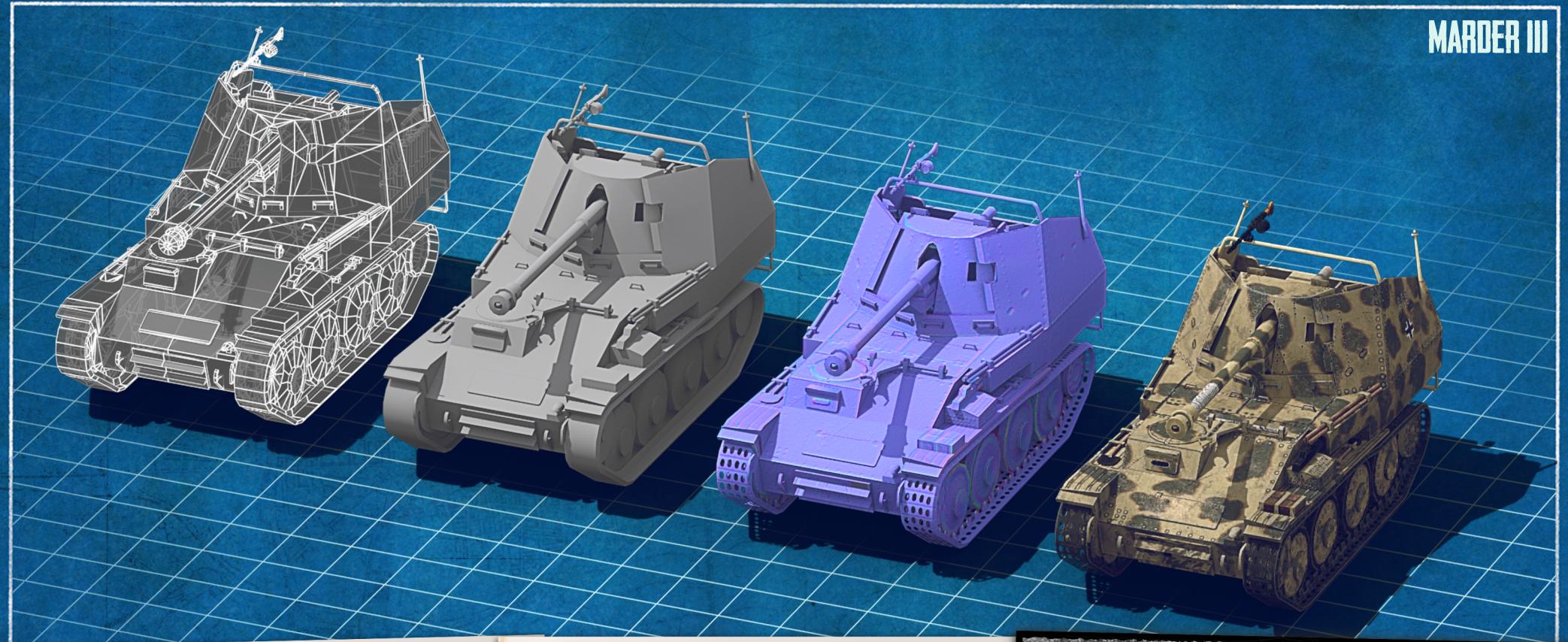


Here you can discover the richness of the modeling and especially all the elements of creation for each unit: wireframe model, solid model, normal map, and full texture result.

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JEEP OP



# MARDER III





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